and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) on deemed deputation, 419 staff have so far opted for absorption in IRCTC and the rest have submitted option to revert back to Railway. However, the last date for exercising the option for absorption in IRCTC is 31.10.2007.

(b) Many steps have been taken by IRCTC to ensure job satisfaction and job security of the deemed deputationists in IRCTC like, the services rendered by them in railways will be treated as continued for their retirement benefits and the benefits which were available in railways have been protected. Besides this, they have been offered the pay and allowances of IRCTC and higher grade and pay. They have been counseled on one to one basis to explain the benefits offered by IRCTC on their absorption.

Advanced reservation facility

1510. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he had announced in this Railway Budget that advanced reservation facility would be made available upto three months prior to the departure of the journey and accordingly implemented it which was beneficial to the large sections of the people;

(b) whether lately, his Ministry has reduced the advanced reservation facility upto two months; and

(c) the reasons for not implementing this facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Advance Reservation Period (ARP) for rail reservation was enhanced from 60 days to 90 days *w.e.f.* 01/03/2007. This modification was made prior to presentation of Railway Budget for Financial Year 2007-08.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) ARP has been reduced from 90 days to 60 days *w.e.f.* 15/07/2007 based on the booking pattern and the feedback received from Zonal Railways.

Facilities to passengers

†1511. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the facilities provided to the passengers of express trains and superfast trains by Railways;

(b) whether it is a fact that facilities have not been raised in any manner for the passengers of the trains categorized as superfast trains since last year;

(c) if not, the details of such facilities; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.